Reclaiming of Indian Treasures from British Museum

3861. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have any record of Indian treasures in Britain;

(b) whether it has been brought to the notice of Government that a Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries had reported that the Indian collections were neglected;

(c) whether it is a fact that Guru Govind Singh's Kalgi and Shivaji's Sword are among the objects salted away in British Museum; and

(d) if so, what steps Government propose to take for reclaiming the Indian treasures from Britain?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Step Wells in Gujarat

3862. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA :

DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY :

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the crumbling condition of the centuries old step wells in Gujarat; and

(b) if so, what steps Archaeological Survey of India propose to take to save them from obscurity?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. Nine stepwells under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India are in a fairly good state of preservation and necessary repairs are taken up as and when required.

Creation of National Culture Fund

3863. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any national culture fund has been created:

(b) if so, the purpose thereof; and

(c) the assistance so far given from the fund to writers, artists etc., category-wise?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) Yes Sir. It was launched on 29-3-97.

(b) and (c) The fund is not intended to duplicate the schemes of the Department which include financial assistance to writers and artistes. Instead it is intended to promote private-public partnership for mobilization of extra budgetary resources, conceptualization and implementation of projects for conservation of the rich cultural heritage of the country. Among the projects undertaken are :

(i) The upgradation of the environs of the Humayun's Tomb complex in collaboration with Agha Khan Trust for Culture.

(ii) The restoration and enlivening of environs of Shaniwarwada, Pune in collaboration with Pune Municipal Corpoation, Maharashtra State Tourism Development and Pune industrialists.

(iii) Child City, Durgapur in collaboration with Children's Academy, Durgapur.

(iv) Preservation of oral heritage in partnership with Jnana Pravaha Trust, Varanasi, and

(v) Preservation of Anegundi Village, Karnataka as a living heritage village in partnership with the Kishkinda Trust.

Further the Indian Oil Corporation is setting up a foundation, with a corpus of Rs. 25 crores to collaborate with the National Culture Fund for conservation of monuments and development of infrastructure. To begin with, eight monuments have been identified for conservation and development.

Profit earned from Bharat Rang Mahotsav

3864. DR. MAHESH CHANDRA SHARMA : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the budget provision of "Bharat Rang Mahotsav" for March-April 2000 organised by National School of Drama, New Delhi;